

Iowa Outdoors
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
www.iowadnr.com

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1. Newest state Park Names – Banner Lakes at Summerset State Park
2. Yellow Bass Action Heats Up At Clear Lake – by Lowell Washburn
3. Memorial Day Weekend Official Start to the Iowa Camping and Recreation Season
4. Spring Turkey Hunt Ends On Positive Note – by Lowell Washburn
5. Fishing Clinics Scheduled for 2004
6. Iowa Fishing Report

NEWEST STATE PARK NAMED – BANNER LAKES AT SUMMERSET STATE PARK

DES MOINES – Iowa's newest state park now has a name. The Natural Resource Commission approved the designation of the former Banner Wildlife Area to Banner Lakes at Summerset State Park during their meeting on May 13.

The state park name resulted from a naming contest sponsored by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Approximately 180 entries were received. Banner and Summerset were the two most popular names with a total of 22 entries. All 22 entrants will be invited as guests of honor at the park dedication, scheduled for later this summer.

“Summerset is a name that is directly tied to the area,” said Angela Corio landscape architect with the DNR’s state parks bureau. “We were looking for a name that presents a positive image for the new park.” Corio said a paved bicycle trail that bisects the park, a local area road and an area inn and winery will all share the name Summerset, giving a sense of place to the new park.

The Banner Mining Company mined the area for coal before the area was turned into a wildlife area in the 1950s. The two lakes at the park have been named Banner Lakes in honor of the park's history.

A seven person blue ribbon committee reviewed all entries and recommended the final name for commission approval. Serving on the committee were Mayor Jerry Kelly

of Indianola, Mayor Frank Cownie of Des Moines, Frank Shultz of Carlisle, Cami Rankin from Polk County, Dave Mineart from Warren County, and Jeffrey Vonk and Angela Corio from the DNR.

"Work is underway and we expect the park will be open to the public later this summer," Corio said. "Recreational opportunities at the park will include mountain bike trails, a paved bicycle scenic loop, winter trout fishery, two boat ramps, picnicking and numerous fishing accesses. A concession-operated shooting range located next to the park will also offer snacks for trail users. There will be something for everyone and it will be a great addition to our state park family."

###

YELLOW BASS ACTION HEATS UP AT CLEAR LAKE

By Lowell Washburn

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

CLEAR LAKE--The fishin's been pretty good at Clear Lake. So far this spring, anglers have creeled some nice walleyes, a few jumbo-sized channel catfish, and the pre-spawn crappies are just now beginning to venture into north shore canals.

Oddly enough, it seems that no one is talking about those things. Instead, most of the lake's bait shop fish talk is currently focused on another species -- the yellow bass. How many yellows did you catch yesterday? Were they on the rocks? How deep? What were they hitting on?

For the past three or four seasons the fast hitting, hard fighting, good eating yellow bass has reigned as undisputed king of Clear Lake's angling scene. The lake enjoyed a record harvest last year when anglers removed more than 230,000 adult yellows from the population. The fast action continued into the winter, eventually providing a through the ice harvest that was the best in recent decades. Biologists say the bite isn't over yet, and that the notoriously scrappy fighters are gearing up for another round.

This season's yellow bass fishing began to heat up during the last days of April. By the first week of May, anglers were reporting abundant catches and encountering huge schools that allowed for hits on nearly every cast.

"The word is getting out, and it appears as if yellow bass are going to create a lot of excitement around Clear Lake again this year," said DNR district fisheries biologist, Jim Wahl. "I think anglers are going to enjoy some very excellent [yellow bass] fishing this season. I don't think, however, that we'll be able to match the 2003 harvest which was the best on record. A lake just can't set a new record every season."

Yellow bass are rapidly approaching the peak of this year's spawn, says Wahl. Huge schools of males are currently stacking up along the shallow, rocky shorelines of preferred habitats such as Dodge's Point, the Island, and the Outing Club.

During the spawn, yellow bass may become extremely finicky and are quite selective in what they'll hit. For best success, anglers need to think light, and think small. When combined with small diameter line, ultra-lite jig heads [1/32 or 1/64 ounce] will usually bring the fastest action.

Once the spawn is complete -- which will be around the end of May -- the vast schools of yellows will fan out to forage over areas of sand or muck. They'll be extremely interested in feeding, and that's when the fast action should really begin.

"Last year, our yellow bass harvest remained very consistent over an extended period of time," said Wahl. "We currently have two or three, adult year classes of fish that are very strong. Hopefully we'll see that kind of angling success again this summer."

When it comes to yellow bass, biologists urge anglers to forget catch and release and to concentrate on "catch to eat".

"This is definitely one fish species that people do not have to feel bad about taking home. Yellow bass have tendencies to overpopulate, and we want anglers to harvest as many adults as possible," said Wahl. "Yellow bass are prolific and short lived. One way or the other, the adult fish are going to disappear, and they might as well be utilized. There's no such thing as keeping too many."

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MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND OFFICIAL START TO THE IOWA CAMPING AND RECREATION SEASON

DES MOINES – The Memorial Day weekend marks the official beginning of Iowa's camping and recreational season and staff with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) are preparing for the large crowds at state parks and recreation areas.

Many state parks, including Gull Point, Viking Lake, Pleasant Creek, Brushy Creek, and Lake Ahquabi, are popular destinations for campers and campsites at these areas will fill quickly.

"Campers will start arriving at some of the more popular campgrounds as early as two days before the weekend starts in order to get a good spot," said Jerry Reisinger, regional supervisor for state parks in northeast Iowa. "However, some campgrounds will have campsites available throughout the weekend." Reisinger said campers should call the park office before leaving home to check on campground occupancy.

Campers looking for great scenery should check out Lake Wapello, Backbone or Springbrook state parks. Recreational opportunities abound in these areas. The Memorial Day weekend marks the opening for the concession operations located at these parks. Campers should plan to bring a supply of firewood, ice or charcoal, since most state parks do not have concession operations.

Since this may be the first camping trip of the year for some campers, Reisinger said they should check their camping equipment before leaving home.

“Make sure flashlights have fresh batteries, the trailer tire pressure is good, camp stove fuel is sufficient, and you bring all the camping necessities,” he said.

With the busy holiday weekend, it is important to remember to be courteous to other park users.

“We plan to have all available state park staff working the holiday weekend to accommodate visitor needs and ensure that everyone has a safe and enjoyable weekend,” Reisinger said. “Whether boating, fishing, camping, or picnicking, you will likely encounter staff in the parks. Be sure to let them know if you have any questions or concerns.”

A number of out-of-the-way parks may be the perfect setting for campers wanting to avoid the crowded campgrounds.

"Lake of Three Fires, Wapsipinicon, Pilot Knob, and Lacey-Keosauqua state parks are beautiful parks that do not have the heavy camping pressure," said Sherry Arntzen with the DNR's state parks bureau. "The Explore Iowa Parks camping program is in full swing and offers campers the opportunity to earn prizes by camping in a number of different parks, including the lesser used parks."

Campers are also urged to watch the weather while camping and have a plan if severe weather occurs. Severe thunderstorms and tornadoes can occur quickly during the spring and early summer. If a storm does move toward a state park or recreation area, park staff will warn all visitors. Park users should seek shelter in the event of severe weather.

Many out-of-state visitors will be staying in Iowa parks and recreation areas during the Memorial Day holiday and local campers are encouraged to let their out-of-state neighbors know where safe areas are if a threat of severe weather occurs.

Pine Lake State Park will be closed this Memorial Day weekend due to campground renovations.

For information about camping rates at Iowa state parks and recreation areas, visit the State Parks Bureau website at www.exploreiowaparks.com.

For more information, contact Heather Cline at 515-281-5602.

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SPRING TURKEY HUNT ENDS ON POSITIVE NOTE

By Lowell Washburn

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

McGREGOR---The fourth and final segment of the 2004 Iowa spring turkey hunting season concluded on Sunday. For about 60,000 or so of us, there are some exciting memories and what seems like a long, long wait until next year's season rolls around.

The DNR hunter survey cards aren't back yet and so, of course, it's too early to answer the frequently asked questions regarding how many total turkeys were bagged this spring. But I don't think I'm going too far out on a limb to say that the 2004 spring hunt will certainly prove to be one of our best ever. Since the first segment of this year's turkey season began on April 12, I've talked to a large number of hunters from across the state. In every instance, the hunters had either bagged a bird or had had plenty of close encounters.

It was a memorable season for me as well. On the first morning I hunted [of the first season], I passed up a jake just after sunrise and then called in and bagged a gobbler 10 minutes later. I hunted with bow and arrow during the fourth season, and that proved to be a bit more challenging. After not bagging any of the seven birds that could have been taken with a gun, I finally arrowed a three-year-old tom at a distance of 7 1/2 feet. After stowing the shotgun and bow, I returned to the telephoto camera lens. From the beginning of April until now, I've photographed a total of 26 jakes and toms as well as numerous hens, which easily surpasses any previous year.

I spent the last weekend of the 2004 season poking around the wooded blufflands near McGregor. I didn't have any particular mission in mind -- I just hoped to see, hear, and maybe photograph one more wild turkey, find a late mushroom or two, and for sure take advantage of the world class birding opportunities that come to the Mississippi River woodlands each May.

The mushroom hunting provided a pleasant surprise. In spite of the late date, I collected around 10 pounds of morels during my first hour or so in the woods. The songbirds were just as plentiful, and the timber was bursting with their sound and color. The best surprise, however, came on Saturday night when I received a phone call from my good friend Ed Kotz, Sr.

Kotz, who lives in Grinnell, had heard that I was in Northeast Iowa, and thought he might drop by the following morning and attempt to bag a gobbler during the season's final day. During the past three decades, or so, Ed and I have pursued pheasants, waterfowl, and deer during hunts that took place in Iowa, Missouri, and Wyoming. Ed is 80 years old now. And although he doesn't hunt upland birds, geese, or big game anymore, he just can't seem to get turkeys out of his system. After we hung up the phone, I really began to look forward to the following morning.

When Kotz arrived at 4:30 a.m., he seemed downright chipper. I knew he'd left home by 1:30 in order to get here in time to hear the first gobble.

"Wow. I hope I can still do that at 80," I thought to myself.

The stars were beginning to fade into what promised to be perfect morning -- cool, clear and calm. Within minutes of entering the timber, we were greeted to the day's first gobbles. Unfortunately, none of the clamor was coming from our ridge. Instead of traversing the steep, 300-foot descent into the next valley, we decided to continue down the logging trail we were on. It paid off. Ten minutes later a gobbler fired up less than 200 yards distant.

We cautiously picked our way through the timber until we were within a hundred yards or less of the turkey's roost tree. After taking a seat against an ancient maple, we released a series of soft tree yelps in the tom's direction. He responded by going nuts with a triple gobble.

Five minutes later, the tom flew down and headed in our direction. Although we couldn't see the tom through the thick understory, his latest gobble said the bird was within 60 yards or so.

"Get ready," I whispered. I realized that I really didn't need to say that, I just have a way of displaying a firm grasp of the obvious whenever wild turkeys are nearby.

Suddenly, a second gobbler fired up just over the hilltop. The bird began to gobble incessantly, and the sounds told us that he was approaching fast. The end result was that the second [apparently dominant] bird drove the close [subdominant] tom back over the ridgetop. Once that task was accomplished, the dominant bird refused to come closer. No amount of pleading could coax him, and the bird finally gobbled his way back out of earshot. Ed didn't seem too disappointed, and we both agreed that it had been a loud and exciting encounter.

We moved on. During the next couple of hours, we identified a ton of songbirds, several species of woodland wildflowers, and found more mushrooms. We discovered one morel that was practically large enough to hang ornaments on.

"I've never seen anything like this," said Kotz. "I doubt I'll ever see a mushroom as big as this again."

I didn't have anything to measure with, but I know that morel was at least 9 1/2 to 10 inches tall. Unfortunately, the plant had just passed its prime. We decided to leave it standing and come back next May to gather its offspring.

Later, we had another close encounter with a tom that gobbled twice -- from directly behind us, of course. Soon after that, it was time for me to head back home.

We both agreed that it had been a great outing in spite of not bagging a bird. Ed suddenly announced that he hadn't had enough yet, and was heading back into the woods for another hour or two. That night he left me a voice message saying he'd watched two adult gobblers herd a flock of three hens around in an opening in the timber. He hadn't been able to entice them to come over to his position, but had sure enjoyed the show. Hours later, his voice still carried the enthusiasm of that encounter.

"Wow," I thought to myself. "I sure hope I can do that at 80."

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FISHING CLINICS SCHEDULED FOR 2004

DES MOINES – Free fishing clinics are scheduled around Iowa for 2004. Activities vary at each clinic and may include fish identification, how to operate a reel, different ways to cast, knot tying, how to handle fish, bait presentations and different fish cleaning methods.

Call the clinic for more details.

May 22, Youth Fishing Clinic, Hickory Grove Lake, Colo, 515-232-2516
May 22, Youth Fishing Clinic, Armstrong Park, Fort Dodge, 515-955-2968
May 30, Youth Fishing Clinic, Nelsons Park, Dow City, 712-263-3740
June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, Lake Hendricks, Riceville, 563-547-3634
June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, Willow Lake, Woodbine, 712-647-2785
June 5, Youth Fishing Tournament, Lake Pahoja, Larchwood, 712-472-2217
June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, Bacon Creek Lake, Sioux City, 712-252-1335
June 5, Fishing Tournament, Swan Lake State Park, Carroll, 712-792-4614
June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, Arrowhead Lake, Neola, 712-485-2295
June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, Lake Anita State Park, Anita, 712-762-3564
June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, Maquoketa River Backbone State Park, Dundee, 563-933-4417
June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, Gustafson Lake, Sioux Rapids, 712-749-2563
June 5, All Ages Fishing Clinic, F.W. Kent Park, Tiffin, 319-645-1011
June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, Twin Springs Pond, Decorah, 563-382-4158
June 5, All Ages Fishing Clinic, DeSoto Bend, Missouri Valley, 712-642-5403

June 5, Fishing Tournament, Raccoon River Park, West Des Moines, 515-222-3320

June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, Marr Park, Ainsworth, 319-657-2400

June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, Pioneer Park, Clarinda, 712-542-3864

June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, Mill Creek State Park, Paullina, 712-448-2254

June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, Chicken Creek Saulsbury Bridge Rec. Area, Muscatine, 563-264-5922

June 5, All Ages Fishing Clinic, Gahn Wildlife Refuge, Burlington, 319-753-5808

June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, Black Hawk Lake – Ice House Point, Lake View, 712-662-4530

June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, Prairie Rose State Park, Harlan, 712-773-2701

June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, Central Park Lake, Center Junction, 563-487-3541

June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, West Lake Park, Davenport, 563-328-3281

June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, Water Works Park, Des Moines, 515-244-3773

June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, Andrew Jackson Demonstration Farm, Andrew, 563-652-3783

June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, Rockwell City Recreational Area, Rockwell City, 712-297-8611

June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, Ikes Lake and Clubhouse, Newton, 641-792-0348

June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, Great Western Park, Manning, 712-792-4614

June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, Pinicon Ridge County Park, Central City, 319-892-6485

June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, McIntosh Woods State Park, Ventura, 641-357-3517

June 5, Youth Fishing Clinic, Lake Cornelia Park, Clarion, 515-532-3185

June 6, Youth Fishing Clinic, Pin Oak Marsh, Chariton, 641-774-2438

June 6, Fishing Tournament, East Park, Mason City, 641-421-3673

June 6, All Ages Fishing Clinic, Wilder's Park, Allison, 319-267-2742

June 6, Youth Fishing Clinic, Pollimeir Park, West Point, 319-372-7561

June 6, Youth Fishing Clinic, Browns Lake, Salix, 712-233-1513

June 6, Youth Fishing Clinic, Hickory Grove Lake, Colo, 515-232-2516

June 10, Youth Fishing Clinic, Lake Manatt, Cedar Falls, 319-277-2187

June 12, Youth Fishing Clinic, Elks Lodge Pond, Charles City, 641-756-3490

June 12, Youth Fishing Clinic, Gateway Park and Preserve, Marengo, 319-655-8466

June 12, Youth Fishing Clinic, Marion County Park, Knoxville, 641-627-5935

June 13, Youth Fishing Clinic, Spring Lake Park, Jefferson, 515-386-5674

June 13, All Ages Fishing Clinic, Yellow Smoke Park, Denison, 712-263-3409

June 15, All Ages Fishing Clinic, Pin Oak Marsh, Chariton, 641-774-2016

June 19, All Ages Fishing Clinic, Langwood Education Center, Grandview, 319-523-8381

June 19, All Ages Fishing Clinic, Water Works Park, Des Moines, 515-244-7424

June 24, Youth Fishing Tournament, Lake Malone, DeWitt, 563-847-7202

June 26, Youth Fishing Clinic, Littlefield Recreation Area, Exira, 712-268-2762

June 26, Youth Fishing Clinic, Snyder Bend Lake, Salix, 712-258-0838

July 2, Youth Fishing Tournament, LeMars Municipal Park Pond, LeMars, 712-546-5910

July 8, Youth Fishing Clinic, Don Williams Park, Ogden, 515-795-2809

July 9, Youth Fishing Clinic, Don Williams Park, Ogden, 515-795-2809

July 10, General Fishing Clinic, Lock and Dam 14 Recreation Area, Pleasant Valley, 309-794-4301

July 21, Youth Fishing Clinic, Springbrook State Park, Guthrie Center, 641-747-2276

Aug. 14, Fishing Tournament, Badger Lake, Fort Dodge, 515-576-4258

Aug. 14, Youth Outdoors Skills Day, Horseshoe Pond, Maquoketa, 563-652-3783

Sept. 7, Youth Fishing Tournament, Don Williams Park, Ogden, 515-795-2809

Sept. 25, Youth Fishing Clinic, Bennett Pond, Bennett, 563-886-6930

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IOWA FISHING REPORT

For the week of May 18, 2004

www.iowadnr.com

For current information on fishing conditions for your lake or area, contact the office in that district. Phone numbers are listed with each district report.

Southwest

Three Mile (Union): Channel catfish are being caught at the upper end and in shallow bays with night crawlers, dip baits and liver. Walleye fishing is good over the rocky areas and while trolling crankbaits around the big points. Crappie and big bluegill are biting better and are moving into the shallow rocky areas in the early morning and late evening. Largemouth bass fishing is good all over the lake.

Twelve Mile (Union): Fishing is good for channel catfish in the upper ends using liver or night crawlers. Some walleye are being caught around the big points.

Icaria (Adams): Fishing is good for catfish using night crawlers and liver. Some walleye are being caught trolling the dam.

Green Valley (Union): Crappies are starting to move over the deep rocks early and late in the day. Some really big bluegill can be caught in the shallows with night crawlers. Channel catfish can be caught in the bays using night crawlers.

Little River (Decatur): Crappies, 9 inches and larger, are biting in the shallow rocky areas during the early morning and late afternoon. Walleye are being caught while trolling the dam and large points in the lower portion of the lake. Catfish can be caught in the bays using liver or night crawlers.

Slip Bluff (Decatur): Some bluegill and crappie are being caught around the tree piles during mid-day and off the rocks by the dam early and late in the day. Largemouth bass can be caught off the west shoreline structure.

West Lake Osceola (Clarke): Bluegill and largemouth bass fishing is excellent in the timbered coves and along the dam. Crappies are on the beds in the upper end of the lake.

Grade Lake (Clarke): Bluegills are biting well on night crawlers and small jigs in the corners of the dam and along the east shore.

Binder (Adams): Largemouth bass fishing is good along the dam. Bluegill and crappie are starting to bite.

Old Corning (Adams): Nice sized bluegills are biting along the dam and the east side of the lake.

Fogle Lake (Ringgold): Crappies can be caught early in the morning and late evening in the rocks off the dam and jetties. Some bluegill can be caught off the west shore and in the west bay.

Walnut Creek Marsh (Ringgold): Bluegill and crappie can be caught along the south shore and around the jetties.

Wilson Lake (Taylor): Crappies can be caught off the rocks along the dam early and late in the day.

Windmill Lake (Taylor): Bluegills can be caught with night crawlers in the shallows.

Big Creek (Polk): Crappie fishing has been good using jigs with or without minnows. Walleye fishing has been good using live bait rigs and spinner rigs with minnows and night crawlers, although most of the walleye are below the 15-inch minimum length limit.

Lake Ahquabi (Warren): Bluegill fishing has been good using jigs with worms or twister tails. Largemouth bass fishing has been good, with some fish caught using top-water lures. Crappie fishing has been slow; the best fishing is early morning and late afternoon.

Beaver Lake (Dallas): Bluegill fishing has been good on small jigs and worms. Largemouth bass fishing has been excellent, although most fish are below the legal size limit.

Hooper Lake (Warren): Bluegill fishing has been good using worms and jigs. Largemouth bass fishing has been fair to good.

Don Williams (Boone): Crappie fishing is excellent using minnows and jigs in shallow water along the shoreline, with 12 to 14 inch fish common. Largemouth bass fishing is good using plugs. Channel catfish fishing is good using night crawlers and cut baits toward the north end of the lake.

Rock Creek (Jasper): Crappie fishing is good using night crawlers or minnows and jigs. Channel catfish fishing is fair using night crawlers. Largemouth bass fishing has been good from shore and boat using jigs and casting lures. Walleye fishing has also been fair using jigs and minnows.

Red Rock (Marion): Crappie, usually 10 inches and larger, and white bass, have been hitting on jigs and minnows in the bays and coves. Channel catfish have also been hitting in the bay and cove areas using night crawlers and worms.

Red Rock tailwater (Marion): Crappie and white bass fishing has been good in the tailwater using jigs and minnows. Some walleye and have also been caught.

Roberts Creek (Marion): Crappie fishing has been good using jigs with minnows and/or night crawlers. Channel catfish have been hitting on night crawlers.

Easter Lake (Polk): Crappie fishing has been good on jigs and minnows. The crappies are averaging 8 to 9 inches. Anglers are catching a few walleye while crappie fishing. Bluegill fishing has been good but most were small.

Des Moines River (Polk): White bass fishing has been good. Some walleye have been caught using jigs below Scott Street Dam in Des Moines.

Saylorville Lake (Polk): White bass fishing has been good just below the outlet from Big Creek Lake. Crappie fishing has also been good in this area. Some anglers have reported good but spotty success on white bass in other parts of the lake using twister tails.

Saylorville Tailwater (Polk): White bass fishing has been excellent using white or chartreuse glitter twister tails, and sonar. Channel catfish fishing has been good using cut baits (shad).

Viking (Montgomery): Crappie and bluegill fishing is good using tube jigs along shoreline and around structure. Channel catfish fishing is fair using night crawlers or liver. Largemouth bass fishing has picked up in the evening around structure.

West Hacklebarney (Montgomery): Crappies and redear sunfish are being caught along the dam.

Cold Springs (Cass): Fishing is good for 7 to 8-inch crappies using jigs and minnows around structure near shore.

Manawa (Pottawattamie): Fishing is good for channel catfish. A few crappies are being caught in the lagoon.

Orient (Adair): Fishing is good for 7-inch crappies using jigs and/or minnows along the dam, and the southeast shore near the water pump house. Anglers are also catching small bluegills.

Mormon Trail (Adair): Walleye fishing is good using crankbaits or jigs. Anglers are catching 7 to 9-inch crappies. Channel catfish is fair using night crawlers or liver.

Nodaway Lake (Adair): Anglers are catching walleyes and crappies.

Prairie Rose (Shelby): Fishing is excellent for 7-inch crappies using jigs and minnows around rocks and woody structure. Bass fishing is good. Anglers are starting to catch channel catfish on liver.

DeSoto Bend (Harrison): Walleye and crappie fishing is good. Walleyes being harvested are 15 to 16 inches. Crappies being caught are 8 to 12 inches. Anglers are catching good numbers of largemouth bass. Carp are being caught near shore.

Southwest Iowa Farm Ponds: Bluegill, crappie and largemouth bass fishing is excellent. Remember to ask permission and clean up your trash when fishing on private land.

For more information on fishing in southwest Iowa, call the regional office in Lewis at 712-769-2587.

Southeast

Mississippi River Pools 16 to 19: Fishing on the Mississippi River has been slow to fair but is beginning to pick up with the warmer water conditions. The water temperature at Muscatine is 69 degrees and the river stage is 10.3 and is expected to remain stable over the next week. Anglers continue to catch white bass in the tailwaters and the mouths of the creeks on jigs and minnows. Fishing has been fair for walleye and sauger in the mouths of incoming rivers and the tailwaters on jigs tipped with minnows and crankbaits. Bluegill and crappie fishing is picking up in the backwater areas. Jigs tipped with wax worms and minnows are working best. Fishing is good for channel catfish on shad, night crawlers, stink bait and crushed minnows. Anglers also report catching a few flathead catfish on large chubs.

Lake Odessa (Louisa): The water level is starting to be lowered for the summer draw down. It is currently about 1-1/2 foot low and will continue to drop slowly until early July. Some nice bluegills are being caught in some of the smaller backwaters on a worm and a bobber.

Lake Darling (Washington): Anglers are catching lots of the smaller crappies. With some sorting, you can go home with a nice mess of 8 to 9-inch fish. The bigger crappies should be in later this week if the weather stays warm. **There will be road construction going on in the park, but the main boat ramp will still be open.**

Lake Geode (Henry): Bluegill fishing has really picked up over the last few days. Concentrate along the edge of the weeds in the shallow bays. The bass are also in shallow with some anglers reporting a few on the beds. Crankbaits worked along the edges should provide some nice action.

Lake Belva Deer (Keokuk): Bluegill fishing is fair to good, depending on the weather. Use a very light jig tipped with a piece of worm and work it very slowly around the flooded trees and in the flooded vegetation. Anglers are catching good numbers of the 10 to 12-inch bass and an occasional legal sized 15-inch bass. Try fishing plastic worms around the flooded timber for the bass.

Lake Rathbun (Appanoose): Crappies have been hitting on small jigs and minnows. Some fish continue to suspend in 6 to 10 feet of water.

Lake Sugema (Van Buren): Largemouth bass have been hitting on artificial lures. Crappies are biting in deeper water.

Lake Miami (Monroe): Bluegills and crappies have been hitting on small jigs and minnows. Most of the fishing has been in shallow water.

Lake Macbride (Johnson): Crappie fishing has been good on warmer days when the fish move in to the shorelines to spawn. Most crappies caught are between 8 and 10 inches. Small jigs or minnows fished around shallow brush are working well. Shoreline fishing has been good along the causeway and off the fishing jetties. Some walleye are being caught and the largemouth bass fishing has been good. Some catfish can be caught in the evening in the shallow bays on dead shad. Bluegill fishing is good, but most fish are between 5 and 7 inches.

Coralville Reservoir (Johnson): Catfish continue to be caught on shad in the shallow flats. A few nice crappies are being caught in the bays near brush. The Corps of Engineers has started raising the water levels of the lake and should be to the summer pool elevation of 683 by the end of May.

Lake Iowa (Iowa): Crappie fishing has been good around the brush piles on small jigs or minnows. Bluegills are starting to spawn and can be found in the shallow bays.

Kent Park Lake (Johnson): Catfish have been biting in the evening. Bluegills can be caught in the shallows on small jigs or small pieces of worm.

Diamond Lake (Poweshiek): The crappie fishing has started to increase with the warm weather and the fish are starting to move into the shorelines. Small jigs have been working well. Bluegills can be caught off the beds in the shallow bays. Some catfish can be caught in the evenings.

Iowa River (Johnson): Crappie, white bass and catfish are being caught below the dams in Coralville and Iowa City.

Skunk River (Washington and Henry): Catfishing remains hit and miss with the fluctuations in the weather. Night crawlers and minnows seem to be catching fish.

For more information on fishing in southeast Iowa, call the regional office in Brighton at 319-694-2430.

Northeast

Mississippi River Pools 9 to 15: Water levels on the Mississippi River have risen the past few days and levels are expected to stay steady throughout the week. Water clarity is very good after a week of somewhat turbid conditions and the temperature is staying near 62 degrees. Largemouth bass are still being caught in huge numbers in the tailwaters of both **Lock and Dam 9 and 10** using jigs and spinner baits. Anglers are allowed to keep only five bass and they must be at least 14 inches long. Bluegills are biting in good numbers in tailwaters and backwater areas of **Pools 9-11**. Try using a small jig tipped with a worm. Crappies will be moving into their spawning locations

within the next few weeks. Often, anglers need to try brushy areas in backwater lakes until the fish move in. They can literally start biting over night. White bass can be seen starting to chase minnows in the tailwater areas of **Lock and Dam 9 and 10** as well. These fish can be caught on small spinners and white tube jigs. Lucky anglers will often catch smallmouth bass in the pursuit of white bass as well. Freshwater drum (sheepshead) may be the easiest fish to catch in the Mississippi River. They are a very tasty and quite fun to catch. A simple worm rig with a sliding sinker is all you need. Good areas for drum fishing include boat landings, such as the Army Road landing east of New Albin in **Pool 9**, off the new parking lot in Harpers Ferry leading into Harpers Slough (**Pool 10**), the Turkey River landing near the mouth of the Turkey River east of Millville or off the county boat landing at Mud Lake just north of Dubuque (both in **Pool 11**). The emergency spillway at Guttenberg can also produce good numbers of drum. Freshwater drum fishing is excellent using night crawlers in **Pools 12-15**. Some large drum are also hitting crankbaits. There are no restrictions on the number of freshwater drum that can be harvested. Some channel catfish are being caught on night crawlers and leeches fished off the bottom or along rocky shorelines. Crappie fishing is good using jigs and/or minnows backwater areas of **Pools 12-14**. Good areas for crappies include Middle and Lower Sabula Lakes (**Pool 13**) and Rock Creek and Cattail Slough (**Pool 14**). A few bluegills are being caught on worms fished in the backwater areas of **Pools 12-14**. Largemouth bass fishing is very good in the backwater areas in **Pools 12-15** using spinner baits and crankbaits. White bass (stripers) are hitting minnows fished in Middle and Lower Sabula Lakes (**Pool 13**). Walleye and sauger fishing is good on the wing dams in **Pools 12-14** using night crawlers, leeches or crankbaits.

The **Turkey** (Fayette and Clayton), **Cedar** (Mitchell and Floyd) and **Upper Iowa rivers** (Howard, Winneshiek and Allamakee) are high and muddy after recent heavy rains. The **Yellow River** (Allamakee) is fishable and trout are biting.

Cedar River (Black Hawk): Walleye and channel catfish are good on night crawlers.

Maquoketa River (Delaware): Walleye fishing is good on jigs tipped with a night crawler.

Lake Delhi (Delaware): Crappies and yellow bass are hitting jigs and minnows.

Volga Lake (Fayette): Crappie fishing is good on small jigs. Bluegills are hitting a piece of night crawler or worm fished under a bobber.

Lake Hendricks (Howard): Bluegill and crappie fishing is good on worms or small jigs.

Lake Meyer (Winneshiek): Bluegills in the 6 to 7-inch range are hitting worms. Crappie fishing is good using small jigs.

Big Woods, Brinker (East Lake) and South Prairie (Black Hawk): Crappie fishing is good on a jig and minnow fished along the shoreline or over brush piles.

Casey Lake (Tama) in Hickory Hills Park is good for 8-inch bluegills on jigs and night crawlers fished next to brush piles and structure. Largemouth bass are being picked up with a variety of lures (crankbaits, rubber worms and spinner baits).

Trout stream conditions are variable. **Big Spring Pond**, next to the Turkey River on the Big Spring Hatchery property, offers families easy access to trout fishing. This pond was opened to public fishing in 2004 and the hatchery staff encourages families to bring younger anglers to this area. Brook, brown and rainbow trout are stocked three

times a week (including Saturdays). Plan a trip to tour the Big Spring Hatchery and fish the pond in the near future. There is also an active eagle's nest downstream of the state property. For current trout stocking information on other northeast Iowa trout streams, call the trout stocking hotline at 563-927-5736. You can also access the trout stocking calendar through the internet at www.iowadnr.com and go to the fish and fishing web pages.

For information on fishing in northeast Iowa, call the regional office in Manchester at 563-927-3276.

Northwest

Muskie season is closed until May 20 on Spirit Lake, East Okoboji and West Okoboji lakes in Dickinson County.

Spirit Lake (Dickinson): Fishing is good for walleyes. Use spinners tipped with night crawlers or a jig and minnow in 12 to 18 feet of water. Anglers are catching a lot of sub-legal fish. Night fishing off the docks or wading is producing some keeper sized fish.

West Okoboji (Dickinson): Anglers are finding some walleyes during the day. Look for clumps of weeds in 14 to 18 feet of water. Live bait rigs and slip bobbers with minnows, night crawlers or leeches can all produce at times. Fish slowly. The night bite is best from 11 p.m. to 4 a.m. Long-line trolling crankbaits will produce best. The panfish action is stable. Fish the Harbor, Triboji or the canals on the Miller's Bay side. Northern pike action is good using a jig and minnow. Smallmouth bass fishing is good on the rock piles. Use small grubs or tubes tipped with a minnow.

East Okoboji (Dickinson): Anglers are sorting through a lot of sub-legal sized walleyes to catch a keeper. Fish the trestle pilings for panfish.

Silver Lake (Dickinson): Fishing is good for walleyes by trolling crankbaits or spinners tipped with a night crawler.

Lost Island (Clay and Palo Alto): Some nice walleyes are being caught in the evening. Try using a slip bobber and minnow or trolling crankbaits.

Lake Pahoja (Lyon): Good numbers of nice sized channel catfish are available. Traditional catfish baits continue to produce excellent action.

Black Hawk Lake (Sac): Crappie fishing is fair in Town Bay and the marina using mini jigs and a bobber. Yellow bass are fair along the east shore. Fishing is good for 8-inch bullheads at the inlet.

Storm Lake (Buena Vista): Walleye fishing is fair along the south shoreline. Channel catfish are good on shad entrails.

Brushy Creek (Webster): Bass are in shallow around the edge of the lake. Any type of plastic lure, minnow or bass bait is producing fish. Anglers are catching a few crappies and bluegills on live bait.

Clear Lake (Cerro Gordo): Yellow bass fishing is fair around Dodge's Point, the Island and outlet. Use small jigs and minnows casting into the shoreline. Walleye fishing is fair using live bait and jigs or trolling crankbaits. Bullhead fishing is fair. Use night crawlers on the bottom and fish from sunset into the early evening.

Beeds Lake (Franklin): Anglers are catching crappies by drift fishing in 12 to 18 feet of water using small jigs and minnows. Most of the crappies are 7 to 9 inches.

Rice Lake (Worth and Winnebago): Bullhead fishing is good using night crawlers on the windy shorelines.

Silver Lake (Worth): Bullhead fishing is good using night crawlers.

Upper Pine – Lower Pine (Hardin): Crappie fishing is good. Use minnows and small jigs around the downed trees.

For more information on fishing in northwest Iowa, call the regional office in Spirit Lake at 712-336-1840.

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